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Issue: Inadequate parenting and interpersonal skills are associated with family instability which negatively affects child well-being and results in increased costs to individuals, communities, and governments.

## Issue

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Inadequate parenting and interpersonal skills are associated with family instability which negatively affects child well-being and results in increased costs to individuals, communities, and governments.

# Background

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- ❑ Children thrive in stable, predictable environments.
- ❑ Children who live in unstable families risk problems academically, socially, and emotionally in both current and future settings.
- ❑ All families are somewhat at risk for instability, but some families face greater threats to stability than others.

# Establishing Need

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- ❑ Children who have been removed from their families for neglect or abuse are at greatest risk for problems related to family instability.
- ❑ In Tennessee, 8,494 children were victims of abuse and neglect in 2002.
- ❑ In 2002, there were 9,359 children in foster care in Tennessee.
- ❑ They averaged 27.7 months in foster care.

# Court-Ordered Parents

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- ❑ Many parents whose children have been removed are required to complete parenting classes.
- ❑ There have been no statewide standards for this type of program regarding content, length, or evaluations.
- ❑ DCS is now requiring their contractors to use evidence-based programs.
- ❑ PCAT is now a statewide contractor for court-ordered parenting for DCS.

# Identifying Opportunities

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- Potential to partner with PCAT in offering the evidence-based Nurturing Parents Program.
- In counties where this is not available, offer Parenting Piece by Piece or Kid Smart.
- In all counties, partner with foster parent associations to provide parent education for foster parents.

# Divorcing Parents

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- ❑ One of the most prevalent forms of family instability is divorce.
- ❑ Tennessee tied for the 8<sup>th</sup> highest divorce rate nationally in 2003.
- ❑ Legislation requires divorcing parents to attend a minimum of 4 hours of parent education.
- ❑ Four hours barely scratches the surface.
- ❑ Additional resources online may help.

# Relatives as Caregivers

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- In Tennessee approximately four percent of children (56,682) are living with relative caregivers without a parent present.
- Relative caregivers often have ambiguous legal status.
- Relative caregivers are not eligible for all of the services and resources provided to foster parents because of their ambiguous status.
- Children raised by relative caregivers come with issues that make parenting difficult.

# Stepfamilies

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- Nearly half of all marriages involve a remarriage for one or both parties.
- Most of these involve children.
- Half of all Americans living today will be involved in a step relationship in their lifetime.
- Stepfamilies have a slightly greater risk of divorce than first marriages.
- Children in stepfamilies tend to have similar outcomes to children in divorced or single-parent families.

# Teen Parents

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- Though the teen birthrate is at its lowest in over 60 years, at 43 births per 1000 teens, it is still a great problem.
- The Tennessee rate is 54.3 (15-19 yrs. old)
- Children born to teen parents are at risk for being raised by a single parent, living in poverty, low educational attainment, early sexual activity, and problem behaviors.
- They are also at greater risk for experiencing abuse and neglect.

# Program Expectations

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- Agents adopting “Turning Points for Families” will:
  - Identify two or more of the five target audiences they plan to work with during 2007.
  - Acquire recommended curricula.
  - Develop a plan for accessing the target audiences.
  - Identify potential local program partners.
  - Seek potential funding sources.
  - Implement and report on program in SUPER using recommended tools.